

ARE YOU A LANDLORD OR PROPERTY MANAGER?



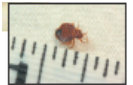
BED BUGS



What are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are flat, brown, wingless bugs that live where people sleep. Their presence has grown in numbers in the last several years as they have become more resistant to pesticides formally used to control them.

They do **NOT** carry disease and are **NOT** a sign of “being dirty”. Although they are approximately ¼ of an inch and can be seen by the eye, they hide very well during the day and can go un-noticed. They hide in mattress and sofa seams, behind light switches and outlet plates, backpacks, clothes, in boxes, any crack or crevice, behind the wallpaper, and anywhere dark. Like mosquitoes, they feed on blood. Bed bugs can live up to one year without a meal and come out to feed only when people are sleeping.



Actual
Size

If your tenant has called you because they suspect they have bed bugs, you are required by law to “maintain the dwelling you own without insect infestation” (MA: 105 CMR 410.550). It is the landlord’s responsibility to respond to any complaint of bed bugs. Inspection, by appropriate person, to confirm the presence if bed bugs is very important before treatment. **DO NOT PANIC**. They can be removed if you follow an organized and structured pest management plan. Chemical treatments alone will **NOT** solve the problem. Throwing away furniture will **NOT** solve the problem. As a matter of fact, throwing out infested furniture only helps spread the bugs to others who may pick up the discarded furniture.

How do I know if my tenants have bed bugs?

The first sign of bed bugs are the bites. Since not every person has a reaction to a bite, one person sleeping next to another may not show signs of any bite at all. Signs include; red spots on exposed skin while sleeping such as arms, legs, hands and neck, red spots on sheets, and dark stains in the seams of mattresses, box springs and under furniture.

Only a Licensed Exterminator or Health Inspector can confirm an infestation.



On a mattress



On Skin



Under Furniture

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What do I do?

First understand that a bed bug infestation begins with ONE insect traveling into a building and is not your fault, or the fault of your tenant. **Call a Licensed Exterminator or a Health Inspector to confirm the infestation. They will give you advice and further instructions.** Remember **DO NOT PANIC!** Once identified, the tenant and a licensed exterminator will need to **work together** on an organized and structured pest management plan. The exterminator will give your tenant instructions for preparation before a treatment. Without cooperation between the tenant AND exterminator, the bugs will **NOT** go away.

Some tasks that your tenant will need to do include but are not limited to:

- ❑ **Vacuum EVERYWHERE** thoroughly with a strong suction vacuum, including all mattresses, box springs, furniture, and walls (including crevices, cracks and behind pictures).
- ❑ **IMMEDIATELY** place vacuum bag in a plastic bag, **SEAL IT**, and place in a trash container **OUTSIDE** the building.
- ❑ Seal mattresses, box springs and pillows in zippered vinyl coverings. Leave sealed for one year. (If there are bugs present, they will have nothing to feed on, will not be able to get out, and will eventually die).
- ❑ Collect all clothing and washable fabric items from all rooms. **Wash in HOT** soapy water. **Dry on HOT** heat and **IMMEDIATELY** place in plastic sealed containers where they need to remain until the exterminator has finished treatment.
- ❑ Understand that worn clothes and blankets will smell like you, a blood meal to a bed bug, and is a favorite place for them to hide.
- ❑ If you need to take something out of the sealed container, such as your clothes, repeat washing and drying instructions above, and return to sealed plastic container until the exterminator has finished treatment.
- ❑ Reduce clutter! Inspect each item thoroughly to be sure bugs are not present. Store items you do not use often in a sealed plastic bag or container until the exterminator has finished treatment.

Who can I call for Help?

Only a Licensed Exterminator or Health Inspector can confirm you have an infestation. To find a Licensed Exterminator visit the web site www.nepma.org.

The Lowell Health Department can be reached
at 978-970-4010 Ext. 91056.